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Digest of the Rural-Urban Women's Conversations

Held on the Invitation of the
Secretary of Agriculture

Washington, D. C., April 13, 14, 1939



PREPARED IN THE DIVISION OF INFORMATION
AGRICULTURAL ADJUSTMENT ADMINISTRATION



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FOREWORD

History was made when the Secretary of Agriculture invited 50 women to come to Washington to talk about the relation of agricultural programs and the American home. It was made by the invitation and it was made by the conversation of the women—25 urban and 25 rural—who examined many controversial questions and difficult problems in a spirit of friendliness and tolerance.

That spirit has been spoken of again and again by the individual women since their return home. In letters and in talks they have analyzed it as being based on the primal importance of the home to society and on the need which homemakers have to understand the conditions vitally affecting the home and the welfare of children.

Not only the tolerance which permitted frank discussion of the relation of interests between country and city production but that which bridged the gulf between competing regions has been frequently commented on. One woman expressed it this way:

"As the conference progressed I developed a clearer understanding. It was obvious that all were working toward the same goal; and that deep down in every woman's heart, regardless of whether she came from a farm in the 'Deep South' or an apartment in a northern city, there was an earnest desire to see every human being in our country able to obtain that abundance which constitutes a fair and honest livelihood."

Four months after the coming of these 50 women to Washington one of them deliberately sat down to reevaluate their work. This is what she says:

"It was immensely stimulating and thought-provoking. I was proud of the way in which the women participated in it and handled it. Very much more than in most such gatherings they listened with concentrated interest to what was being said rather than withdrawing into themselves to formulate what they were going to say themselves at the very first opportunity. That meant that there was far less airing of personal opinion and far more of an attempt to grasp and understand the ideas under discussion than is usually the case.

"It was a very great relief that we did not arrive at any 'conclusions,' or formulate any 'points,' or outline any 'program.' It left us with open minds and with a sense of responsibility for thinking through the many questions, main and incidental, which were raised in the course of our sessions. Nobody gave us the answers. Nobody even took us by the hand and graciously and gently, but firmly, led us to conclusions. That, I hope, left us all mentally uncomfortable and spiritually a little breathless—in which state of grace may we continue for some time, because as long as we are searching for answers, so long shall we do that most difficult of all things—think for ourselves!"

Informal reports seem to indicate that the above commended "state of grace" has been discussed at meetings on an average of 6 times per

woman with an approximate 50,000 persons in attendance at the meetings. Some of these were farm-and-home-week gatherings at State colleges. Attendance ran high at these particular meetings, which in many cases were composed of delegated persons who in turn reported back to their local groups. Considering this, it becomes impossible to even estimate the spread of the widening circle of influence from that history-making invitation and response.

The digest of the conversations is offered here both as a record of an important event and a help to those who believe that good things should lead on to better ones.

DIGEST OF THE RURAL-URBAN WOMEN'S CONVERSATIONS HELD ON THE INVITATION OF THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE

Washington, D. C., April 13, 14, 1939

FIRST MORNING

Discussion Question: What Major Problems Do We Face in Attempting To Create a Balanced Abundance in America?

Welcoming the urban and rural women called together to counsel on the problems of agriculture and the American home, on behalf of the Secretary of Agriculture, Assistant Secretary Harry L. Brown said in part:

"... You have been invited here to counsel with the Secretary of Agriculture and some of the people in the Department of Agriculture about problems which are of great concern to women as homemakers and as citizens. They are also of very great concern to the Department of Agriculture. . . . We have made an attempt to see that women who have lived with the problems of the great agricultural regions are here to meet women who have lived with the problems of an industrial civilization. . . . We want you to consider that the gathering is yours, that the flow of information here is from you to the Department of Agriculture. To that end we have planned for a discussion meeting.

"During the time various specialists in different phases of the work of the Department with which you may be dealing will be available.

"Now what are the things on which we are asking you to counsel with us? Let me repeat a few sentences from the letter of invitation you received from the Secretary: 'The American home needs abundance of food and clothing. The American farmer needs buyers for the abundance he produces so that he may enjoy some of the abundance that industry can produce. An increasing balanced abundance to both the American home and the American farm can be brought about only if homemakers and farmers understand that the problems they face are essentially the same. These are also the problems with which the Department of Agriculture must deal on behalf of all consumers and all producers. . . .'"

At the close of his remarks, Secretary Brown introduced Mrs. Edwin Bevens, of Arkansas, chairman of the public welfare department of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, to serve as general chairman. Mrs. Bevens said:

"... I think this is one of the greatest challenges that has ever been handed out to women, that we, both urban and rural, have been called in to discuss with our Government policies pertaining to the

economics of Government. The very fact that we are here proves that we have accepted the challenge. . . ."

As a leader of the first morning's discussion Mrs. Bevins introduced Drummond Jones of the Program Planning Division of the Triple-A, who also served throughout by summarizing each session's discussion. After each person around the table had been introduced, Mr. Jones started discussion by throwing out the question, **"What must we do to secure balanced abundance in America?—or do we perhaps already have abundance?"**

Typical of the evidence presented by farm women was that of one rural homemaker who reported from Iowa that many houses are not painted, many are in ill repair, and only about one-fourth have electricity. She added that only about 8 percent of the tenant homes in Iowa have running water in them.

City women pointed to the slums, with as many as 400 people crowded into one block, as evidence that abundance is lacking. One woman said that farm goods do not find their way into these city homes because the families cannot buy, and that if it were not for free lunches many children would faint in the schools. Another stated that there are almost 1,000,000 working people in families whose incomes are less than \$800 a year.

Miss Lucy Randolph Mason, public relations representative of the C. I. O. in the South, pointed out some evidences of lack of abundance, in response to the question asked by the chairman.

She said in part: "During the 5 years I lived in New York as secretary of the National Consumers' League, I traveled extensively in the North, East, and South, and everywhere poverty and a totally inadequate standard of living for the lower-income groups were apparent. Since I moved to Atlanta in July 1937, I have traveled chiefly in the lower South, where I find this inadequacy still more apparent.

"Recently in Columbus, Ga., talking with textile workers there, I found that heads of families had averaged from \$5.80 to \$12 a week in their earnings the past year. Some of these men said that the only substitute for vegetables and fruit they could get to go with their bread, fat pork, and beans, was peppergrass gathered along the railroad tracks."

Referring to the National Emergency Council's Report on the Economic Condition of the South, Miss Mason said she had been a member of the Advisory Committee of Southerners called in to consider the report, and that there is no exaggeration concerning Southern poverty in that report.

"The dire and unrelieved poverty of vast numbers of Southern people is a constant challenge to the conscience of all of us as Americans," she said.

The question advanced to: "Is it possible to produce sufficient abundance for all?"

After general discussion, Dr. Mordecai Ezekiel, economic adviser to the Secretary of Agriculture, was asked to give specific figures. Before midmorning recess, Mr. Jones summarized the discussion as far as it had gone.

". . . Starting with the question: Do we have abundance? We agreed that we did not. Instance after instance was quoted of your feeling that this abundance was lacking. Some of the evidence

came from rural regions, some from urban populations. We went on to ask: Could this Nation have abundance? Those of us who talked about it feel that it could. We ended with Dr. Ezekiel's very fine analysis which pointed out that, not only in materials, but also in the techniques necessary for producing commodities from those materials, there is potentiality for abundance. He even dipped back into the past to indicate that in 1929, which we look back to as our finest year, we were utilizing what was then our capacity only to the extent of about 90 billion dollars, whereas we could have produced a 125-billion-dollar national income with the plant then existing. On the question of: Do people actually deserve abundance? one of our speakers toward the end, in talking about potential abundance, indicated that we ought to have both automobiles and food. Certainly Dr. Ezekiel's figures would help to bear that out. Now what problem does that leave you? We have the potentialities for the abundance, and I am going to propose that we discuss the question: What is the matter? Why don't we have it?"

After the recess Mr. Jones started the discussion by raising several questions.

"During the last part of our discussion three major questions arose. One had to do with, Do we have abundance? Another, Do we have the capacity for abundance? And the third which was raised—but not discussed—Is abundance the thing we actually want to achieve?"

"We have more or less assumed that we do want to achieve it. However, the other question deserves discussion. Let us keep it in mind as the day passes. Do some of our population who do not know how to use abundance still deserve abundance? We shall probably come to that before we are through. Now here is the problem which you raised in your last discussion: We don't have abundance but we have the capacity for it. In fact, we have always had capacity for much more than we have as yet obtained.

"Since this is true, how do you account for the fact that in this land of plenty we still have unemployment and low levels of living? What is the matter? What is the cause of all of this? Why unemployment still? What is the trouble?"

Mrs. Gladys Talbott Edwards, of North Dakota, director, junior department, Farmers Union, pointed out:

"The 34,000 farms in my State are now being aided by the Farm Security Administration—not because the farmers have been lazy—they have produced millions of bushels of the good hard wheat needed to feed America; nor are they being helped only because of drought; but rather because of two things: First, the 25- and 30-cents-a-bushel price; and second, the small share of the consumer's dollar that came to the producer. Not production alone, but distribution, is one of the problems in securing a balanced abundance."

Discussing distribution, several delegates raised the question of price-fixing, and finally Dr. Ezekiel was asked to make a statement on this point. Dr. Ezekiel said in part:

"They (certain industries) set the price and produce only as much as they can sell at that price, which is exactly the opposite from the usual theory of competition. The industries that have operated that way include not only automobiles and steel and farm machinery,

but they also include cement, glass, aluminum, and a long range of other products. If you go through American industry and take those industries in which the market is dominated by one or a few concerns, you have most of your petty and basic industries. They set the price, and the judgment of the officers almost always leads them to set the price at a higher level than it would be set if those same concerns were competing with one another. Since they set the price at a higher level, they set it at a level where few will be sold, and since they set it where only a few units will be sold, they set it where less will be consumed and fewer people will be employed.

"This so-called 'monopolistic competition' characterizes those industries where they have concentration of production. It is not present in cotton textiles, in most of women's clothing and a large part of men's clothing, in certain parts of industries such as lumber products, and in certain parts of wholesale and retail selling, and not at all in farming prior to the Triple-A. With those exceptions, a large part of our industry is under this noncompetitive price-fixation or public-control price-fixation like the railroads.

"Under this system the management of industries can elect to retain an unduly large share of production profit for their own pockets and disburse a smaller part of that as wages, which would be buying power.

"I will give you some figures outlining that. Between 1923 and 1929 we had perhaps 20 percent increase in the output for workers. During that period, 1923 to 1929, the total wage disbursements of all the city industries increased only 20 percent, which was the same as the increase in the number of workers employed. In other words, there was no increase at all in the income of workers in city industries between 1923 and 1929 on the average for the country. During the same period, payments in the form of dividends and interest increased 50 percent; these payments increased two and a half times as fast as the payments going to the great mass of the population which might have consumed the products had they had the buying power.

"This fact of 'monopolistic competition' or control-of-price production policies is one of the great causes that made that situation possible."

Discussion turned on certain efforts toward more efficient distribution, and Mr. Donald Montgomery, Consumers' Counsel of the Triple-A, was asked to make a statement, which follows in part:

"Competition in distribution tends sometimes to add to margins and therefore to raise the spread between the producer's and consumer's price. However, there are a number of department stores and chain stores and mail-order stores which do introduce a very real competitive situation. In recent years certain independent retailers and others have been going to the legislature to get laws to avoid the effects of that competition. The distribution business, especially through the small stores, is not all just a business. The people from the farm country will recognize what I am going to say. Farming is not just a business, some farming is a big business, and some farming is a little business, and some farming is merely subsistence—just a way of keeping off the relief roll. The same is true of retailing. It is because of that large element of family work

and subsistence that the retailer is now trying to find some way to guarantee security of his source of income."

From price policies, the question turned on wage policy as a factor in the situation. Miss Rose Schneiderman, secretary, office of the industrial commissioner, New York State Department of Labor, made the following statement:

"I would like to point out one factor which is the occasion of misunderstanding and sometimes of antagonism between farm groups and organized labor. If labor gets a 10 percent increase and the price of dresses goes up 10 percent, it is very common, I think, for labor to be blamed entirely, and for it to be said that labor has forced the price of that dress up 10 percent—there is a very natural reaction against labor then. But one should see that the cost of labor is only a small percentage of the cost of a dress. I think it is about 20 percent, so if a 5-dollar dress goes up 10 percent, it is only about 2 percent of that increase that is really due to the 10 percent wage increase for the worker who made the dress . . ."

The question of whether the same practice applied to other commodities—milk at 13 cents a quart to the consumer, for instance—was raised.

Mrs. Alice S. Beleser of Chicago, chairman of the Consumers Service Council, reported:

"In a price-raise on milk in Chicago, it was given out that the drivers were asking the company to reinstate the long-promised \$5 per week cut in wages. And at the same time the farmers were losing their farms. It was found that the penny increase in price did not go to the farmers.

"Consumers should have conferences with producers and both groups should understand the elements of the prices paid by consumers."

Another woman pointed out that the price of clothes would be much less if factories ran the year round because the overhead of a factory for a whole year is charged against the product of a short seasonal run of 20 weeks. It was also pointed out that the publicity on a worker's wage was on the hourly rates, but on a yearly average the wages of a cloak maker is about \$15 a week. At that wage the worker can buy little of the products of either farm or factory.

It was again emphasized that both farmer and factory worker would benefit by a closer understanding of the elements of the price that each pays for the goods the other produces.

Summarizing the morning's discussion, Mr. Jones said:

". . . We started this morning by asking the question, 'Do we have abundance in America?' I believe we agreed that we do not. . . . City and farm groups here reported to the effect that there is a large proportion of our population without the means of decent living. . . . We asked finally, 'Why is this true? Do we have the potentialities for abundance?' We found that we have not only materials but the techniques for production. We found that we can produce far more than we ever have. We then came back after recess and asked, 'Why in a land of plenty do low levels still exist?' And the subject of industry and certain practices which affect distribution were re-

viewed. We found that due to monopoly there are certain price policies which have been maintained, and in business generally, certain investment policies which have affected this picture. The point was made, also, that division between farmer and worker has been maintained by artificial means. . . . We ended on this note: Two questions have been raised. How can the farmer buy products of industry without a fair return on his own product? How can the worker who produces buy the products of the farmer without adequate income for his labor? . . ."

FIRST AFTERNOON

Discussion Question: What Must We Produce in America to Attain Abundant Living in All Our Homes?

Discussion leader for the first part of the afternoon, Mrs. Edwards, began the conversations by posing the question:

"What must we do in America in order to have abundance?" Pointing out that it was often said that one-third of the Nation is ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-fed, Mrs. Edwards asked what is meant by ill-fed? Does it mean that people are actually hungry—or badly nourished?

After some discussion, Dr. Hazel Stiebeling, senior food economist of the Bureau of Home Economics, was asked to make a statement. Dr. Stiebeling said in part:

"There still are varying standards by which we might measure present consumption. First, the scientists in the field of nutrition have concluded from their study of the effect of food upon physical well-being that a quart of milk per day for young or old is none too much, but if we accept a standard of a quart of milk per day per person it would probably take twice as much milk as we have now to supply it. Take the minimum allowance of calcium . . . for the normal growth of children, and mere maintenance of adults. It probably amounts to a pint of milk for each child and a cup of milk for each adult daily. Such amounts given the people who do not now have that amount would probably mean an increase of 15 percent in the national production of milk.

"It is disastrous to health to fall below certain levels. There is a wide zone between what is enough to feed people well ostensibly and the amounts that will contribute to abundant health of the optimum level. The statement was made this morning that perhaps a third of the Nation is ill-fed. We would think from our studies in the last few years in the Bureau of Home Economics that that is probably a very conservative statement. We have had the opportunity to examine some 9,000 records on food consumption obtained from city families, village families, and farm families in different sections of the country, and fully half of those failed to get, in one or more respects, what science now thinks is the minimum for the maintenance of good health in the human body.

"Now of course that doesn't mean that all of these diets are deficient in many factors. But many of them are. And as a result we find pellagra, bad dental conditions due in part to poor tooth nutrition, rickets, and occasionally scurvy or beriberi. Then there are

probably many symptoms of ill-nourishment that we are not able to recognize simply by looking at a person.

"In the Bureau of Home Economics during the last 2 years, Dr. Booher has been studying how much vitamin A the human adult requires. She finds that on a deficient diet a person's requirement for light is markedly increased without the individual's being aware of it. It takes very special instruments to detect such a deficiency."

Comparison pointed to the fact that these conditions are nationwide. Discussing causes for this, Mrs. Guy Roop, of Virginia, president of the National Council of Home Demonstration Clubs, made this statement:

"I was thinking of the woman who spoke about the little child in Chicago who was so tired of beans. There is something that might be substituted which might cost no more than beans. I wonder if the diet could be changed a great deal through a program of education?

"I think this: We all need education in how to eat, but I think if you get an increased economic status, you immediately and in the first place get more spread in the diet. I have worked with families in southwestern Virginia. Living conditions in southwestern Virginia are certainly above the average, but with the families with whom I have worked—when I began my work with them—they were using deficient diets. One family, a mother and father and 12 children, each year expected to have cases of flu and colds from the very beginning of the winter. I began a very intensive educational course with that family, impressing upon them the importance of using tomato juice and milk and butter and cream.

"The first year I didn't get such encouraging reports, but the next year when I was trying to impress upon them the importance of sanitation in poultry-raising, the man of the family said, 'Oh, pshaw; that is nothing, worms and chickens go together!' and the wife said this: 'Yes, you said "pschaw" about tomato juice, but you notice after we drank tomato juice every day and had milk every day we didn't have colds.' Education in diets is one of the things that less-privileged farm families as well as town families need, and I think they will respond to education.

"I think this being ill-fed is partly due to ignorance. Some of them might spend just the same amount of money to get a good diet as to get food that is not so beneficial."

Mrs. Benjamin J. Thigpen, Farm Security client, of Halifax, N. C., said:

"The shortage of educational facilities to give such training to those who need it is a part of the lack of abundance."

Miss Mason concurred in this opinion, saying:

"It is a practical question as to how we are going to find money to pay for a huge educational program on the fundamentals of diet when many millions of our families just do not have enough income to buy the bare necessities of life and are compelled to buy the cheapest possible food and prepare it in the cheapest possible way."

Dr. Stiebelling was called on to make a statement on the relation of income levels to adequacy in the diets of families. She said:

". . . I have been interested recently in checking our large study in consumer purchases to see what proportion of the families can afford the various diet plans which we worked out, and I have come

to the conclusion that perhaps half of the people can't afford a diet even as good as the adequate diet at low cost. Now that means that if people have comparatively little to spend for food it is necessary for them to select it wisely if they are to obtain good nutrition. Obviously there are a great many people who do not have enough money to buy a good diet even if it were well selected. In many groups not more than 10 percent succeed in getting a really full, adequate diet in every respect, so we need greater buying power for food, or in the case of farm families much more careful planning of home production. We also need information on what will give us the best returns for our money if we are going to get adequate diets . . ."

Another woman said:

"I became very much interested in this problem when working with relief agencies in Detroit. The budgets were in the low-minimum subsistence levels for our families. For a man and wife alone, \$3.50 a week for food; there is no other allowance. If they get other things, they edge it out of their food budget in some way.

"I puzzled—as I watched those families try to live on those diets—how they could buy economically when they had to get along on so little money each week. That would not only be true of relief families, but people on low wages. They did not have electric refrigerators, and they did not have money for ice. Sometimes I puzzled on how those well worked-out diets work if you aren't able to keep food over a period of 2 or 3 days.

"That whole situation brought home to me as never before the difficulty of managing on a small amount of money, and also the fact that the food budget is the thing that other things have to be edged out of. You see, with working girls and industrial girls, if they have to have more clothes or carfare or a present for somebody, the food budget is the thing that it is edged out of, and I think everyone of us when we find ourselves having to cut down, will use the food budget as the first place. It is a little flexible, it will give, and the amount of carfare needed to go to work is the same every day, you can't get out of it. . . ."

At this point Mrs. C. T. Butler, president, Alabama Council of Home Demonstration Clubs, spoke:

"I am from Alabama, and I am sorry to know that there are so many of our people undernourished. At the same time, I know that many of these who are undernourished do not have to be undernourished. I live in an agricultural section. I have lived on a farm since I was born, a small farm, and we have made a very good living; but I do know that there are many people who eat sidemeat and beans who could have tomatoes and green beans and all these things, because they do raise them in the spring. Instead, they let these tomatoes rot in the field and never preserve the green beans. In the South, in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, practically all over the South, we can grow all-the-year-round gardens. Peppergrass is nice, but we can have spinach or other greens where we grow peppergrass, but they won't eat it; and a lot of them won't eat tomatoes. Indeed, I think, as someone said, it is a question of education. But I do not like to hear the Southland spoken of as being a place where you can't get things. There are ample gardens that grow up in weeds all winter long, there is lots of space that is never utilized, and I know that most

of the farmers would be glad to see something done with this soil that is not being utilized at all."

Mrs. W. G. Kennedy, of Texas, vice president, Texas Home Demonstration Association, contributed this statement to the discussion:

"Our problem is how we can have a greater abundance—isn't that so?" Lack of education among the people as to diet as a reason for lack of abundance is not the rule. I think it has been the exception. It is not the rule. Take our pecan workers in Texas who earned, before the Wage and Hour Law went into effect, from \$1.50 to \$2.50 a week. You cannot give them a lecture on diet. You can't tell them that they must have meat and green vegetables in order to live properly. I think that when you provide for an adequate income you can then go on and teach them how to live. One could find plenty of hours to spend among the professional people to teach those who have incomes above \$10,000 how to live and what to eat. That is not our problem. I think we are just evading the real issue of providing an adequate income so that people can live decently."

The discussion at this point was very animated and several women spoke at the same time. Some of these favored more education on diets, some agreeing that more income was needed, some agreeing with both points of view.

In connection with this discussion, Dr. Louis Bean, economic adviser of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, made the following statement:

"... About 1934, I think it was, the Public Health Service published a set of figures dealing with the growth of 5,000 school children during the years 1928 through 1933 covering the period of prosperity and the early stages of the depression. The children were divided into three groups: those that came from well-to-do families in 1928; those that were well off in 1928; and in the third group, children who came from poor families; and they recorded year by year the growth of these three groups of children in terms of the normal rate of growth that was appropriate to those ages. As I recall that particular study, the growth of the children from well-to-do homes continued about the same through that period in relation to the normal. As I recall, their growth was a little bit better than the average and remained so throughout the period. The middle group of children—those who came from families originally well off but who became poor because of the depression—their rate of growth dropped with the onset of the depression, not badly, but where they had been above average in 1928 and 1929 their rate dropped down to about normal. The experience of the third group interested me more than either of the other two because among these children who came from the poor conditions of low-income families, throughout that period their rate of growth improved toward the normal during the depression years.

"It raised this sort of question in my mind, whether we don't get shifts in the volume of consumption within the different income levels in spite of the fact that the aggregate consumption of the country remains or tends to remain fairly constant as between the years of prosperity and depression. The shift may perhaps take place between those three groups, if you want to deal with two large groups, those that drop into the low-income standards as the result

of the depression and those who are normally on a low-income level, but, being on that low-income level during the depression, came to have the benefit of lower prices. The low-income families living on \$5 or \$6 or \$10 a week in 1928 and 1929, which didn't lose that income in 1932, could buy with that low income more food in 1932 than in 1928."

Dr. Bean concluded his remarks with the statement that electric power was of great importance in the matter of the food of a nation because a by-product of electric power is refrigeration; and refrigeration works miracles in terms of the foods a people can conserve to consume.

Mr. Jones then summarized the afternoon's discussion:

"... Two things have impressed me with this discussion. One is that none of us here is so anxious to push his conclusion or opinion on the group that it prevents the whole group from analyzing pretty carefully the varied viewpoints on these problems; I think that is particularly fortunate. Another is that the fair-minded attitude I have seen here all day long has permitted first one group to talk about their slant on the problem and another group then did the same thing. We have lifted it from the realm of emotion and put it into the realm of intellect, and the surrendering of economic or geographical differences is a very fine thing on the part of all of us.

"I think, as far as this discussion is concerned, the analysis of the food situation is probably a good sample. In describing the food habits of the people, we have crisscrossed back and forth all afternoon between two different sets of ideas. One is the personal set of habits to which people are accustomed in diet; another is the factors behind those habits, those factors being mostly economic in character. I think we have analyzed both. The point was made, that there are a great many people who follow set dietary habits but can do better; therefore, what is needed is education.

"We revolved around that question of education for a while, then somebody contributed the notion that it isn't education at all, it is a question of straight economics—why talk education when people starve? We didn't push that to any fine conclusion because I think no one meant to push one instead of the other. I wonder whether the reason for our difference at the time wasn't because of the section of the population of which we necessarily were speaking. While it is true certainly that there are many farmers that do not raise nutritive diets who could do so, the point was made that you can't do that on the back steps of a city tenement house. There is an economic problem in addition to the educational problem.

"Then another thesis that came up was to the effect that there is money lacking for education—and we indulge in wishful thinking when we try to solve the problem in that fashion. I certainly would not say that we have solved the problem or that we even tried. I do think we have analyzed the factors involved. I imagine there are two things on which we could reach a joint conclusion; one is the economic condition of people who, according to the figures Dr. Stiebeling gives, lack the means for an adequate diet and need help. For this group something must be done. The second is that this will go a long way, but education will likewise be needed. I should say we have pretty well agreed that we do not have abundance yet."

After a recess, discussion was resumed with Miss Schneiderman as discussion leader. The questions she asked to start discussion were: **"What about education? Are schools better? Are opportunities more widespread than they were before the World War when we found that thousands of American-born men couldn't read?"**

Mrs. Raymond Sayre, Midwest director, Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, reported on conditions in her State, Iowa.

"Iowa is supposed to have the highest percent of literacy of any State in the United States, but 42 percent of the children who get to the eighth grade do not go on to high school; and the reason is lack of income to meet expenses and lack of transportation to-and-fro."

The point was raised by Mrs. Charles Schuttler, secretary and editor, Missouri Farm Bureau Federation, that it is possible to become educated without going to high school. Agreeing to this as to individuals, it was, however, pointed out that, generally speaking, children need the foundation of high-school training.

Discussion then turned on the quality of high-school training; the inequity of basing courses of study on college-entrance requirements, when most boys and girls do not go on to college; and the desirability of making training available to young people.

A South Dakota woman made the following statement:

"I come from a State, South Dakota, where certainly the children do not have 'equal' educational privileges. I am thinking of a section in the western part of the State where boys and girls must walk 10, and even 14 and 15, miles to high school daily. Occasionally they are picked up. This past winter I had one boy who said he had only missed 1 day walking 15 miles to high school. He went to a school not having dormitory privileges, so he had to walk. Of course, there was the question of shoes. He would wear five or six stockings in these shoes to enable him to walk to school. I am thinking of another school where dormitory privileges are provided, but there were some who could not afford heat, and boys from the western section warmed stones or bricks to put their feet on at night to keep them warm. Certainly in our State we do not have an equalized chance for education."

Another woman said:

"It seems to me we have hit upon something in which all groups of homemakers can find a community of interest in this matter of education. I was in a State recently where they were attempting to extend the State expenditure for education to every child in that State to \$12 per child. I know of another State where the amount was \$8 per capita, and then I thought of one State where it is \$125 per capita, and, as someone has brought out, it is impossible for some communities to meet that cost of education, even by raising taxes."

Miss Schneiderman remarked, "Well perhaps we ought to have Federal aid for those communities which cannot afford to set up schools."

An urban woman said:

"... The greatest need our country has today is for the rural woman and the urban woman to educate each other to know what

their real problems are and to help each other solve them . . . if some channel of communication between urban and rural women could be established. . . ."

Discussion then turned again on the quality of education now offered; the need of homemaking education, of consumer education, of urban-rural education.

A vital point was raised by Mrs. Amanda H. Facer, Farm Security client, of Utah, who said:

" . . . There is that age of boys and girls who either go to high school or they don't. Now, whether they do or whether they don't, that is the age that they need the special care of their lives. If they are on a farm and their parents don't have money enough to send them to high school and the State doesn't provide a high school, they are turned out. Where do they go? Or if they go to high school and graduate, and if they marry, can their parents keep them and their families? If their fathers are wage earners, can they become the same? What are we going to do with the boys and girls of that age?"

After some concluding discussion about homemaking education, Mr. Jones summarized the discussions for the day:

" . . . We began with the question. 'Do we have abundance in American life?' And we quickly came to a conclusion that we lacked that abundance, so we went into an analysis of that lack. We talked about both rural and urban regions. We quoted from our personal experience, and at that point Dr. Ezekiel analyzed for us income trends in this country. Then we began to ask, 'Could this Nation secure abundance?' We came to the conclusion that we could. The question then arose, 'Why, then, do we lack abundance in the midst of plenty?' We began to analyze the high and low levels of living. You recall our attention began very quickly to be centered on industry in this problem. Some time was given to the question of price policy, considerable time to the question of investment and wage policy. We centered our attention on monopoly as restraint to free competition. We showed how some of industry's funds were diverted into a realm that did not result greatly in consumption. We showed that eventually the machine bogged down. We came to ask whether farm markets were effective. We ended on the note that perhaps there is much more to be developed as to the relation between the farmer as a producer and marketer, and the city worker as both producer and a consumer. We didn't have time to go much further than to state the problem.

"Now this afternoon we have spent talking about some of the needs of life in this country. We divided our time into two parts. We dealt with diet and dietary habits. I think two different sets of problems appeared. One was that there were undoubtedly people who need education in matters of diet, but as someone pointed out, with the facilities now available it is impossible to reach all of those who need and there is, underlying the problem, dire economic necessity which makes the practice of adequate dietary habits almost impossible. We traced some of the results on our farms among our rural people and in our more congested urban centers.

"Later we have been analyzing the educational problem. We have pointed to transportation difficulties, economic factors which operate

to retard attendance at school, inability of some communities to provide. We have spoken briefly of Federal aid for education. We have emphasized somewhat the need for adult education, but our discussion always came again to that economic factor, that inability of people who suffer from underprivilege for one reason or another, to take advantage of educational facilities.

"It seems to me that the conference today has been marked by considerable tolerance, certainly by a sincere degree of searching into our own lives. We have differed, yes, let us hope that the time will never come when we will not differ. But I believe we have agreed by now that we have common problems to solve."

The latter part of the afternoon Secretary of Agriculture Wallace and Assistant Secretary Brown sat in the meeting. And at adjournment the group accepted an invitation from Mrs. Roosevelt to visit her at the White House.

EVENING OF FIRST DAY

Discussion led by Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace, on "What Have the American People So Far Asked Their Department of Agriculture to Do to Aid in Attacking the Problems of Increased Abundance in Living?"

"... It is indeed a very fine thing that so many of you have come here from so many parts of the country and from so many different backgrounds," Secretary Wallace said to the group at the evening meeting.

"... We have in this meeting women who come from backgrounds representing agriculture, labor, and industry. I don't know how far you will get in discovering the nature of the psychological barriers which stand between agriculture, labor, and industry, but we are hoping that you will wrestle with the problem.

"Some little time ago out in Des Moines there was held a meeting at which this problem was discussed. The president of the National Association of Manufacturers spoke on the occasion; Mr. Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of the C. I. O. spoke on behalf of labor. Charlton Ogburn of the American Federation of Labor was invited to be present and expected to be present, but was taken ill and could not be there. I was present in a joint capacity, representing agriculture and Government. Mr. Hillman in his speech urged that the President call a conference of representatives of agriculture, labor, and industry. In the talk which I made I suggested that it would be best for the representatives of agriculture, labor, and industry to get together on their own, and if they wanted to call in the Government, the Government would be happy to sit in. Afterward I was taken to task by representatives of both agriculture and labor for not having given a more sympathetic ear to Mr. Hillman's proposal, so possibly this meeting here is in a way a little experiment along that line. . . .

"I proposed really to take as my text this evening, abundance from the standpoint of children, and to take as a springboard a little pamphlet entitled 'The I. Q., Its Ups and Downs' by George Stod-

dard—a study indicating that on the average the thing that counts with children is not heredity but the way in which they are fed and brought up. The statistical study has to do with some 79 adopted children—children whose mothers had an average I. Q. of 86, and who had on the average completed the second year in high school. The author did not have the I. Q.'s of the fathers, but did know that the fathers on the average had about the same education as the mothers, and that about 40 percent of them were in either the unemployed or common-labor status.

"The children went to ordinary homes, but the kind of homes that would be seeking adopted children. After 2 or 3 years intelligence tests were given to the children and they averaged 116. The test was repeated later on, and it was found that, in those homes where the economic status was lowest, the children had begun to slip; they slipped down to about 105; those children where the economic status was unusually good about held their own—up around 112 to 116. Some of these children came from mothers with an I. Q. of 66, women who, according to ordinary tests, would be practically morons. The children from those mothers were practically as good as the others. This doesn't mean there isn't anything to heredity, it doesn't mean that at all. We do know that there are great variations in the hereditary ability of people. It does suggest, however, that what we have called good breeding or good blood is not ordinarily that. It is good nutrition and good training, good schooling. I don't ask all of you to believe this. I have worked with the breeding of corn over a number of years to prepare myself for it. . . .

"But on the average the thing that counts is the food and the training and the education. Incidentally, in this pamphlet it is brought out that the preschool training—properly followed up with a certain number of children—helped *up* the I. Q., and certain other training caused the I. Q. to slant *down*.

"Now this, as I say, is just merely a springboard, an approach to democracy, an indication of how important it is for agriculture and business and labor to pull together to give the children of all of our people a chance. Now, my particular purpose here is to indicate some of the ways in which the Department of Agriculture can help in that job. Some of the ways in which it has helped in the job.

"Previous to the World War the Department centered its attention almost exclusively on teaching farmers to get more production from an acre of land, to get more production from an hour of man-labor. Starting a little slowly, the Department became increasingly effective in cooperating with the land-grant colleges and the experiment stations, and the extension services, until an hour of man-labor on the farm became about 40 percent more efficient than it had been in 1900.

"As time went on it became apparent that abundance, both for farmers and city people, did not consist merely in helping farmers to become more efficient producers. There was such a thing as coordination in production. Then there gradually developed in the Department a consciousness of the farm population problems, and it dawned on the various workers that about half of the children of the next generation were coming from the farm, and that the farmers were spending more than a billion dollars a year to educate children who went into the cities. It worried sociologists in the cities who

began to be concerned with the poor education that was given to the children in many parts of the country in many rural regions.

"The labor people were concerned because about 40 percent of the people going into the lower ranks of labor, especially, came from the farm; and these farm-trained young people had such low standards of living that the competition was rather difficult for the labor people in the towns.

"The problems with which the Department of Agriculture had been wrestling before the World War and during the decade of the twenties gradually began to take on more definite form. Certain representatives of agriculture began saying to the Department of Agriculture: 'If Government money is used to increase production without regard to whether a market is found for that increased production, then the Department of Agriculture is doing the farmer a positive harm. It isn't right that Government money should be solely concerned with doing good for the consumers of this Nation, if the use of the money is doing harm to the farmer.'

"I would like now to sketch rather briefly the economic background of the situation in which the farmers found themselves, a situation, therefore, in which the Department of Agriculture found itself during the period from 1920 to 1933. Previous to the World War, as you all know, we had markets abroad for the products of some 50 million acres of land, by virtue of the fact that we owed foreign countries interest on some 4 billion dollars. And in those days it was highly essential that we export a certain quantity of farm products each year in order to pay the interest on this debt which we owed foreign nations. But after the World War the situation changed because of the suddenness with which we became a creditor nation, and the position in which we were put in relation to our tariff policy.

"Well, the citizens of this Nation have always been skillful in avoiding ultimates, and so from 1920 to 1929 we dodged the question by loaning money to foreign nations, and so farmers thought they could go on exporting even though the tariffs were high. They didn't realize that the moment we stopped loaning money there would be trouble. But we did stop loaning, and in 1930 the trouble came. We still haven't faced the situation in its ultimate. We are still dodging.

"The problem of the decade of the twenties was complicated further, of course, by the fact that we got rid of about 10 million horses and mules, substituting automobiles and trucks and tractors; and between the loss of the horses and the lack of European demand, we cut down the market for the products of between 50 to 60 million acres.

"I was very much interested recently in reading a statement put out by the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce addressed to the Advisory Wheat Committee in London, taking the farmers of the whole world severely to task because they have not more successfully integrated their production; a most amazing thing to come out of Birmingham, England, the home of Churchill, the city where Churchill was mayor for so many years; the very heart, perhaps, of the remnants of the old school of economics; old, staid Birmingham taking up the cudgels for agriculture in order that the hides of Birmingham businessmen might be saved.

"This discussion traced the world-wide depression of 1930 to the mounting supplies of raw materials over the entire world which began

in 1928. The discussion indicated that clothing supplies had somewhat more than doubled, that the price had gone down, that the income of the wheat and cotton producers had gone down to the extent of about 5 billion dollars annually between 1928 and 1932. Apparently, these businessmen in Birmingham feared that there might be a repetition of that kind of situation. That was the reason they had addressed themselves to this advisory committee on a proposed international wheat conference. They didn't want again to see wheat selling on the basis of 30 cents a bushel on Kansas farms.

"One of the leading and initial causes of business depression in this post-war period stems from the situation in export agricultural products. Now, we all know that it is fashionable in the different groups to say that 'If anything goes wrong with my group, depression follows.' The farmers like to say farmers come first. Labor likes to say labor comes first. Industry says, 'If you don't get our products we can't go on.'

"It is my belief, however, that the great export commodities may come first. That is, if cotton and wheat get into serious trouble, then in a very short period of time there is trouble with regard to employment in the great cities. If cotton and wheat prices go down suddenly on the exchanges, within a very few weeks then there is unemployment, and then a month or two later the dairy farmers and the fruit and vegetable farmers and the livestock farmers get into trouble. But of course business is right in there with labor all the time because the reason business stops employing labor is because it can't make a profit.

"Now there were a great many people who were familiar with this kind of situation in 1933, and the grief was so great that all classes of society agreed that something should be done for agriculture—the Republicans and Democrats agreed something should be done for agriculture. I remember those early conferences in 1932 and 1933. M. L. Wilson and I visited a great many businessmen, life-insurance presidents, and like men, urging upon them the desirability of getting behind a program that would solve this problem, and after this administration came into power many of these businessmen sat in the conferences in March and April of 1933.

"A great many different farm acts have been passed since May of 1933, addressed to this fundamental problem which I have described, and your Department of Agriculture has endeavored to work out what you might call an integrated philosophy which simultaneously would accomplish a number of objectives. Of course we wanted to get the farm income up to about the same relationship per capita with other income per capita as had been enjoyed over the previous 20 to 30 years. We felt that was right and just. We wanted that. We wanted to take into account the fact that Europe could no longer buy the same quantity of stuff as she used to buy because we didn't want to lower our tariffs enough to let the European material in. Therefore we just had to make those adjustments—well, to the extent of at least 30 million acres.

"We also were very keenly interested in the soil problem . . . So we wondered if it wasn't possible to simultaneously raise the income of the farmer to some fair relationship with the income of the people in the town; and at the same time adjust ourselves to

the fact that Europe was out of the market and would in a considerable measure continue to be out of the market; and also take care of the soil.

"Well, we developed a program to do that very thing, and then along came the most extraordinary weather—June of 1934 was when that drought began to appear; we then began to figure out how we could have an ever-normal granary to carry over crops from years of unusual abundance into the years of severe drought. We felt that the farmers would be helped by taking off the market a certain quantity of the product in years of abundance, and we felt that the consumer would be helped in the years of severe droughts.

"That idea was made into legislation in 1938 and is now operating. If it were not for the fact of the ever-normal granary operating through the mechanism of corn loans, corn this last fall would have been selling for 20 cents a bushel. That would have caused great waste of corn, it might even have caused burning of corn in some localities because it was cheaper than coal, as was the case in 1932, but the corn loan made it possible to hold large quantities off the market. If we should this year happen to have another severe drought such as we had in 1934 and 1936, that corn could be used in such a way as to prevent the premature sacrifice of livestock such as was had in 1934. I suspect that the greatest gap in thinking between country people and city people is the failure of town people to appreciate weather. They just can't appreciate weather. They don't know what it is. City industry goes on in rainy weather just the same as at other times. City industry goes on in times of drought. Weather is a rather minor factor with most types of city industry.

"Hitherto in the United States we have not found it necessary to think in an organized community way about weather, but with the situation as it is in this post-war world, it seems to me that we just must think about the way in which weather affects the production of farm products, and with weather as highly fluctuating as it has been since 1930, it seems to me that it is a part of wisdom for us to ask the question: 'Is weather permanently changing?' I see Mrs. Schuttler down here from Missouri. She doesn't need to be shown about weather. Missouri has had the most terrible array of weather since 1930; a more terrible array of weather than any other State, except perhaps Nebraska or Oklahoma or the Panhandle of Texas.

"The Government has found it essential to keep those people from starving. Thousands of them went on relief, then we found it was more economical to finance them in agriculture. We have been able through Farm Security to make loans to them. Even there, however, in many cases, especially in the Dakotas, we found that the soil was so dry that we couldn't even make them a loan because it was just putting them in debt without prospect of getting them out. We had to make grants.

"I want to tell a little bit about our operations with what is known as the Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation, which last year purchased 2 billion pounds of food from farmers; they purchased butter and fruits and vegetables, particularly when the price got down to less than 75 percent of the normal relationship to other prices, but in most cases to less than 60 percent of the normal relationship; and then they distributed the food through the State relief people.

"We are just starting within about 2 weeks in some five or six experimental cities in the country a new method of distributing the products of which there are surpluses. This new plan takes advantage of the cooperation which has been offered by about 85 percent of the grocery stores of the country and the wholesale grocery houses.

"We do want in all our efforts to get as nearly as possible the cooperation of both labor and business; it is just too bad when farmers are at cross purposes with the businessmen in their nearest town. The businessmen in the nearest town have not always understood fully what the agricultural program was about. They thought it was likely to undermine their business in some way. We do hope that this lack of understanding can be remedied. It is just impossible to have the different groups in this Nation fighting each other, because the fighting interferes with balanced abundance.

"Now this Federal Surplus Commodities program and the agricultural programs cost a lot of money. I don't know whether it would be necessary to spend all this money if people were fully employed. I suspect the root of the trouble goes very largely to the question of unemployment. The Department of Agriculture is not charged with that problem. We analyze it from the side, because we know that unless the cities do find an answer to that problem, the agricultural problem is certain to continue. We feel it is appropriate for us in the Department of Agriculture to analyze it statistically and point out, for instance, that in the year 1938 the people in the towns and cities with their salaries and wages were able to buy 10 percent more in the way of farm products than in 1929, whereas the people on the farms could buy only about 80 percent as much in the way of city products.

"It has been suggested many times that the program carried out by the Department of Agriculture was a program of scarcity, where, as a matter of fact, the agricultural program has been one of abundance; but unwittingly the program in the cities has been one of scarcity. I think no one is particularly to blame for it, but the set-up in the cities is such as very definitely to make for scarcity at the expense of the farmer.

"In the decade of the twenties there was an annual flow of private capital, and a fresh flow of private capital of about 5 billion dollars a year. Since 1930 there has been practically no flow of private capital, and part of the time it has been in retreat. Part of the time it was up some, but since 1928 there has been practically no flow of private capital. There has been Government capital flowing at the rate of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars a year. That $2\frac{1}{2}$ billion dollars a year in contrast with the annual flow in the decade of the twenties makes it obvious that there must be either a flow of private capital at the rate of at least 4 billion dollars a year or there must be enough Government capital to make it up to 4 billion dollars, or there must be unemployment. Now there is just no question about those alternatives. You can't escape them. Naturally, we would hope for enough flow of private capital so that it is not necessary for the Government debt to continue to increase, but if the private capital doesn't flow, you can go only so far in permitting hunger and unemployment before you have to step in with Government capital.

"In 1937 an effort was made to withdraw Government capital before private capital was ready to flow, and we all know what happened in late 1937 and 1938. Please do not think I am engaging in any special pleading of any kind. What I am stating is just as dull and dry as an algebraic conclusion. Of course in practical life we always apply our algebraic equations to something living, and there are many ways in which you can apply this algebraic equation. There is where the debate comes in, but about the algebraic equation itself there can be no question.

"We are faced very definitely and clearly with the problem of making democracy so efficient that the totalitarianisms and communisms will find no foothold. If our democracy is not made efficient, if half of our people are unable to buy an adequate diet, and are therefore unable to contribute their part to solving the farm problem, then there will be a continual opening to other ways of creating efficiency.

"We are determined that democracy shall be efficient at all costs. The greatest cost is thinking. That is the hardest work there is—I mean thinking outside the customary channels. We have come, most of us, from high schools and colleges where they taught us studies in the old-fashioned way. The world has changed since 1920, and the high-school and college training that we had doesn't fit us for that changed world, so we have got to get out and think on our own.

"I would close, as I began, by saying that we are concerned above everything with seeing that children, whether they come from the poorer families or the richest families, have adequate food and adequate training and adequate schooling. We want those children, even if they come from the most poverty-stricken region in the entire country, to have such good schooling that they can be just as good as any other children when they come to town looking for opportunity. We do have the resources here in the United States to do that job. There are all kinds of disequilibria to straighten out. There are all kinds of imbalances to set straight. In thinking about those disequilibria and imbalances we can't allow ourselves to be guided by prejudice.

"There are whole regions which have a prejudice against the cotton South because they think those people ask too much. There are other regions which have a prejudice against the dairy region, we will say, because the dairy people have been very urgent in pressing their desires. The Department of Agriculture during the last 6 years has spent a great deal of effort endeavoring to compose these differences, and to compose these differences as nearly as might be in terms of a balanced diet for as many people as possible, in years of drought as well as in years of plenty, in such a manner that the farm income would not be impaired too greatly. The world situation has been such that the Department of Agriculture has been only partially successful.

"I think it is extremely fine indeed of the women here assembled to come and counsel with us about this problem. We appreciate it more than I can say, because I am not eloquent in matters of this sort. I believe you can make a contribution which men cannot make, because in some fields you think more clearly than men, and, moreover, if you arrive at certain conclusions you can have great influence because men defer to you."

At the conclusion of his remarks Secretary Wallace invited discussion, and the question was asked:

"What possibilities are there for getting rid of surplus in the export market now or in the very near future, and what has happened to the trade-agreement program?"

To which he replied:

"The whole agricultural program consists of an enormous number of balances. In the first instance, because of the tremendous carry-overs in 1933, the great objective was to get those carry-overs whittled down—when the drought stepped into the picture. Then began 4 years of the most extraordinary drought affecting certain areas. We then became concerned with trying to hold on to what you might call this country's normal share of the world wheat markets, not an excessive share, not the share we had in the twenties, but something we could hope for year after year, because there are whole groups of people whose livelihood depends on the export of wheat. It looks now like we are going to go a little bit over our objective. . . . In like manner with cotton. We would like at least to hold on to our 6-million-bale share. To some extent this export program is against the spirit which emanates from the trade-agreement program. However, with the world as it is, there are multitudes of things that upset that spirit. I mean essentially that spirit is the spirit of old-fashioned liberalism. . . . It is undoubtedly dear to the heart of right-thinking people in the same way as Christianity is dear to the heart of right-thinking people; that is, the moral concepts of Christianity. But we just don't propose to give up our 6-million-bale export market for cotton, and if we have to have a subsidy, we will go ahead and have a subsidy sooner or later.

"If we need subsidies, we may have them for a time. But that is not the answer. We hope next to have international conferences on wheat and cotton. . . .

"It would really mean that you might have an international ever-normal granary out of which the exporting nations would furnish the same quantity of wheat each year. Thus the importing countries would count on the same amount of American wheat each year—there would be something to count on there. It might mean there would be export quotas for the various commodities. If they have to subsidize, let them subsidize, but not to the point of bringing about trade war.

"I think, if the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce is correct in its analysis, then international agreements with regard to the great war-material commodities would have a profound effect upon the maintenance of world prosperity. The concept is not quite the same as the concept of trade agreements."

The next question was:

"I would like, Secretary Wallace, following up your statement that the program of the Department of Agriculture is not a program of scarcity, to have you tell us approximately how much industries reduced during the past 5 years in proportion to how much agriculture reduced?"

The reply was that industries' production in the years 1937 and 1938 was 19 percent below the 1929 figure; while farm output in those 2 years was 5 percent above that of 1929.

The next question was:

"Mr. Secretary, we are all consumers whether we live on the farm or in the town. I believe in cooperation, as one of the solutions to the whole problem. In fact, one of the most important sentences in your book was 'the cooperative way of life must prevail.' Many of us would like to know to what extent that philosophy has been translated into the working program of your Department. To what extent do your extension-service courses teach the philosophy and technique of cooperation?"

To which the Secretary replied:

"It happens that in 1930 the Department of Agriculture's work on cooperatives was transferred to the Farm Board and we have had no funds with which to work specifically on cooperatives since that date. We have endeavored to get what you might call incidental byproducts of our work. The agricultural adjustment acts, the last two of them, provide, I think, that in our dealings with the agricultural problem we shall, so far as possible, deal with the producers' cooperatives. It is not phrased that way, but that is briefly what it means. As for the consumer cooperatives, the only way we have for touching them is through the Consumers' Counsel. . . . Practically, we don't have funds available for doing the work that you mention. The Congress appropriates most of our funds for specific purposes.

"If there had been formed in the reorganization program a Department of Public Welfare, it might have been possible to approach this idea much more specifically. It may be that in the present reorganization plan something may emerge anyway, or it might be that work can be done with the cooperative unit in the Farm Credit Administration, which succeeded the Farm Board. They deal, I think, almost altogether with the producer type of cooperatives."

The question was asked:

"What form should the efficiency of democracy, of which you spoke a while back, take?"

To which Secretary Wallace answered:

"Well, I think the necessary prelude to it is an infinite number of meetings of this character, because first you have to understand the nature of the problem in order to give determination to the will and to give fire to the heart. . . . The people of the United States undoubtedly have, the vast majority of them, very fine hearts. They are people of good will whether they are businessmen or workers or farmers, but they haven't been under the necessity of knowing what this whole problem was about—the problem that emerged after the great war. The adjustment just had to be made, so when one group, seeing the necessity for certain adjustments, strove wholeheartedly to get those adjustments, other groups were hurt and protested most vigorously, and there did not emerge a concept of the general welfare, but a concept of irritation and confusion.

"It is through that kind of period we have been passing. I think it is inevitable that this period of irritation and confusion will be succeeded more and more by a period of definite understanding and striving for the general welfare. I think it must come. So many leaders in the different groups—I noticed out at Des Moines in that conference—so many of the leaders in the different groups so wanted

it to come, but the rank and file don't know the nature of the adjustments. They are not familiar with the statistics, they are not familiar with the price that must be paid, so it will take literally thousands of conferences of this general type."

After some further discussion the meeting adjourned.

SECOND MORNING

Discussion Question: How Can We Use Our Facilities in America to Insure Continued and Increasing Abundance in Production—and in Living?

Discussion on the second morning was opened by Mrs. Dorothy Hubbard Bishop, industrial secretary, National Board, Y. W. C. A., the leader for the first session, with a general summary of the proceedings the day before. She concluded by asking the question:

"... What, if any of you had within your power to do just one thing to solve the problem of abundance in America—what is it that you would do and why?"

The instant reply from Mrs. Roy C. F. Weagly, of Maryland, secretary, the Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, was:

"If I had the power, I would start the wheels of industry and put people to work at a reasonable wage. This would give industrial workers financial ability to buy agricultural products, which, in turn, would give farmers the purchasing power to buy manufactured goods."

Following that, Mrs. B. L. Parkinson, State president, Mississippi division of the American Association of University Women, said in part:

"... undertake to have all over the country something like this in order that we might create good will. I think there is in the American people the ability to overcome any difficulty if they first realize what the difficulty is, and then cooperate. . . . We have got to get together. I personally feel that we have got to get a little religion into it. It has to be more than just how much a man can eat."

Stability of employment and a yearly wage rather than an hourly wage were advanced as helpful policies.

In this session, as in each of the others, the need for education to go hand in hand with every activity and every phase of life was stressed; education in the techniques of industry; education in wise expenditure of money as consumers; education of children to understand their environment—all came in for discussion.

Particularly the need of education for the understanding of the conditions under which the others work was emphasized as a means of allaying antagonism between workers in different types of employment. Mrs. Schuttler said in part:

"Take, for instance, a farm family. If the whole family works from morning to night, and at the end of the year they have very little income, when they hear that a miner is getting so much per hour or a plumber is getting so much per hour, there is antagonism. That plumber, because of the small number of days and hours he is employed, is perhaps not getting any greater yearly income than the farmer. If there could be an understanding, or if there were some

way they could get a yearly wage, there would be a change in the point of view, which would be helpful. . . ."

The idea was advanced that as consumers we have a common meeting-ground between agriculture, labor, and industry—that consumers must remember that the problem isn't so much what is received in wages or prices for products as it is how much can be bought with that money.

A speaker here pointed out that not only the wages per hour of labor seemed to farmers a lot more than they themselves were getting, but that the shorter hours of work probably also created difficulties between agriculture and labor.

Discussion turned on labor's demand for a higher wage for "over-time" work, and a spokesman for labor explained that the effort there is not to secure more money but to discourage longer hours of work; labor does not want to lay down an arbitrary rule that no one can work longer hours, because sometimes an employer feels that a certain job must be completed, so the extra pay is his proof that the longer hours of work were a necessity.

The relation of the weather to a farmer's success was likened to the effect of weather on the available worktime of those engaged in the building trades. This speaker concluded by saying:

"We haven't the information circulating among all the people how one section of the country lives and how they get along and what the circumstances are. I think greater education and information of that kind would be very helpful."

Discussion of agencies which could include in their work the dissemination of this type of information ensued. Public educational services of many kinds were cited as media through which this information could be carried to all the people.

Mrs. Florence B. Bovett, from Nevada, Western regional director, Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, said in part:

"It is information we need right now. . . . I have a lot of faith in the American people and in American principles. If we sit around the table and put out in the light of day the problems that are there confronting each group, they can be solved, and let us do something more about it than just go from this meeting with a lot of good ideas and inspiration and let it drop."

Another speaker sounded a warning, saying:

". . . I confess to considerable concern when I see occasional farm groups holding farm-urban discussion meetings, ignoring labor which is in that community, and I would issue the warning to farm people who have unconsciously let themselves be subjected to that. . . ."

At this point Dr. James Cavin, agricultural economist of the Department of Agriculture, commented on the wage-price-investment relationship, saying in part:

"Yesterday when it came around to the question of remedies, we mentioned wage policies, price policies, but only incidentally investment policies. And I feel quite strongly that this investment sphere is very important, because it is in the investment sphere that you get to a considerable extent the dynamics, so we may say, of the forward purchasing power. That is, you can have prices relatively high and wages relatively high. You remember how well things seemed to be going in the middle of 1937, and the latter part of 1937, all of a sudden, bump!

the bottom falls out with apparently no reason whatever—then we get a host of theories trying to explain just why. I think we need some stability in the flow of investment. . . . what the Secretary was talking about last night; you have either got to have private credit going along at a certain rate or private credit plus Government credit going along at a certain rate, and on just what has been said I think we need cooperation between the Government and the investment and industrial fraternity. . . .”

Discussion then turned on the flow of private capital into business and the attitude of some businessmen toward the present situation as offering an element of instability to investment as well as to wage-earners and farmers.

Other barriers to the success of business were also discussed: Regional freight rate differentials; tariffs or special taxes levied by one State against the commodities of another State; varying wage scales making for unequal competition; certain marketing agreements making for restricted production; State laws restricting truckloads, which make interstate commerce very difficult.

Mrs. H. W. Ahart, of California, president, Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, made the following statement:

“It seems to me that it has been proved that when the farm income is down we have a lot of unemployment because the farmers are not able to buy tractors, furniture, paint, lumber, and things that are the products of industry. I think, also, that we must have, as has been stated many times today, a better understanding between rural and urban people. I do not know of any better way to develop this understanding than by this: Before we leave this conference today, let us select someone and say to her, ‘Will you come to our group and talk to us about your problems?’ For instance, an urban woman will invite a rural woman to address her group and a rural woman will select an urban woman to address her organization. Let us inaugurate some honest-to-goodness ‘reciprocity days.’

“Now to get back to the original question asked by Mrs. Bishop: ‘If any of you had within your power to do just one thing to solve the problem of abundance in America, what is it that you would do and why?’”

“In answer, I will say, If I were dictator I would take the speculation out of farming. That would be going a long ways. I think most of the farmers plant in optimism and reap in despair, and I know from my own experience as a farm woman—I am a sheepman’s wife—that sometimes we get as low as 7 cents a pound for wool and 4 cents a pound for our lambs, but we feed those sheep just the same. At other times we have received as high as 50 cents a pound for our wool and 13 cents a pound for our lambs . . .”

To which an urban woman replied:

“ . . . In the city we pay 45 cents a pound for lamb chops, and isn’t the problem there the various middlemen who handle all the products from the time they leave the farm? Each man dependent upon a profit—isn’t that our main problem?”

Another urban woman commented:

“ . . . Most consumers require many services. For instance, I am told that of beef sold on the Boston market the largest percent is

bought trimmed, whereas the consumer could buy it very much cheaper if he didn't ask for so much service. We have got to have so much packaging, so much dated coffee, and so on, which all add so much to the cost of distribution."

Next, discussion centered on the importance of the home as a social and educational center and the responsibility of men and women in seeing that the product of American homes is an American citizenship equipped with information and understanding in order to make love of country effective for the general welfare.

Responding to questions, economists Ezekiel, Bean, and Allin discussed further and at length the necessity for a steady flow of capital in promoting activity which will produce a steady and sufficient national income. Various policies, such as the regulation of the flow of private capital as practiced in Sweden, the supplementing of private capital by Government as in the United States, and the confiscation of capital as in dictatorships, were all discussed, with a special plea on the part of Mr. Allin for understanding and realism.

After an intermission, the chairman introduced Mrs. Elbert Piper, Home Demonstration Club member of Oklahoma, as discussion leader of the next period, which was largely taken up by a continuation of the above discussion.

Commenting on the allusion to dictatorships, Mrs. Parkinson said:

"The main thing I don't want is a dictator. Now, what we do in this country may be the same thing under a dictator as it might be under the people working all together, but what would happen to the people is a different thing."

Upon request, Dr. Bushrod Allin, special representative, Office of Land Use Coordination, United States Department of Agriculture, discussed the county planning work of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, and the discussion leader threw the question again to the group:

"Now, do you think that it comes back to us after all? Are we going to carry out this program? How can we obtain a more careful planning? What would you do to carry out our work if you were outlining a plan for it?"

Making the most of existing opportunities was stressed by T. L. Ayers, principal agricultural economist of the Southern Region of Triple-A, who said:

"In the Southern region there are 600,000 families without a milk cow. Last year under the Triple-A program we had available approximately 33 million dollars for soil-building practices. . . . Only about two-thirds of that was used. . . . In South Carolina we passed up almost a million dollars when we had 66,000 families without a cow. . . . Now, why did we do that? I want to raise a question: . . . We passed up assistance to an extent . . . which, if utilized wisely, would have raised the income level probably \$50,000,000. I just want to point out that, while we are talking about getting new opportunities, we ought also to consider a little bit how to get the full value of existing opportunities."

There was more discussion on various organizations, plans, programs, and county planning groups, culminating in a plea made by one woman to the organizations to keep their memberships informed that dictatorships solved no problems for their people.

The discussion leader brought the subject back to conservation with the question:

"Is it just for only the rural people to feel the need of carrying on this agricultural program? Who has the responsibility of carrying on these programs that we have outlined? Is it the rural people, or is it of interest to all?"

Mrs. Elsie W. Mies, of Illinois, vice president, The Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, replied:

"Everybody has to be interested if they are going to eat. If you maintain soil fertility, everybody in the city ought to be interested, but it is the farmer who is the custodian of this land which is the Nation's fundamental wealth. It seems to me that we have gotten to the place where the city person should be interested in how the country home is being carried on, and the country person interested in how the city home is maintained. Take myself, if you will excuse personal reference, I have four children, two of them have been graduated from school. They have been raised in a rural community. One of them is in Boston; one of them is in Chicago. Well, you people in Boston and Chicago ought to be interested in the kind of material I sent to you, and I ought to be interested in the kind of environment you are creating for the boy or girl I sent. And this ever-normal granary—it doesn't seem to me that that is a thing only for the farmer, because, after all, you still have to eat, and it is a good thing to have corn available if a drought should come, in order that cattle may be preserved and you may have beefsteak. It seems to me it is a national problem, not a class problem."

Hugh Bennett, Chief of the Soil Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture, was called on and said in part:

"In this country we have already permitted erosion to ruin—for purposes of further practical cultivation—about 50 million acres of once-fertile agricultural land. Much of this land has been ruined during the past 100 years, and some of it was rendered useless in less than a decade of intensive cropping. Another 50 million acres of cropland are in about as bad condition as the large area already ruined, and the process has seriously damaged vast areas of overgrazed range land. Furthermore, erosion is getting under way on an additional area of crop, grazing, and woodland, comprising in the neighborhood of 800 million acres.

"The plain fact of the matter is that we do not have any too much good land left. Millions of acres now in cultivation are really submarginal. They are too dry, too steep, too rocky, or too infertile for profitable crop production and should be retired to a permanent cover of grass or trees. Of the suitable crop land we do have, at least 60 percent is subject to continued erosion under current farming practices. In other words, 3 acres out of every 5 we have in crops are headed in the general direction of our 50 million ruined acres unless we change our farming methods.

"The effects of erosion are a present serious handicap to tens of thousands of hard-working farmers, who are trying to eke out a living on erosion-damaged land where there is very little opportunity, whether prices are up or down. Yet, in the aggregate, they produce enough to contribute to the development of crop surpluses."

Mrs. Piper called on Mr. Jones for a summary, and he responded: "Your chairman said: 'If you had one single thing to do to solve this situation of inadequate abundance, what would you do?' Someone said at once she would start the wheels of industry moving in order to start employment. Someone else quickly added that this will mean that we will have to achieve a cooperative attitude at those points where today there is a lack of understanding. Someone else added . . . that this may mean that if industry itself is recalcitrant, we shall have to step in and assist, because abundance for all is more important than maintenance of a particular condition at the moment. . . . Since that time we have revolved back and forth between two different emphases. . . . One was the creation of employment to stimulate productive enterprise. . . . The second was the question of what can we do to create the understanding which apparently is going to be necessary.

"We have been considering whether or not through your own agencies or through an agency of Government we can so begin educational campaigns that in place of criticism and prejudice we shall have the conscious and deliberate coming together with attitudes of tolerance in the quest for understanding. The point was made that gatherings such as this would be not for the purpose of finding points of common agreement, but for the purpose of examining our problems at those points of conflict to discover ways to solve them.

"One very significant question arose out of the merging of these two emphases we have been using. Perhaps insufficient time was given to this question in the minds of some of us; namely, can this be accomplished—this thing we want—whatever it is—an abundance under the maintenance of democratic technique and democratic ways of life? There has been much talk about threats to democracy. This talk even went so far as to express itself in the terms of freedom versus food, and for a moment we threatened to become involved in that discussion.

"Certainly this problem can remain in our thinking; as a result of this discussion, have the American people yet discovered democratic techniques which will enable them to plan their future and at the same time conserve their liberty in the process or method of their planning? We have even asked whether our organizations themselves have learned how to do this, and it seems to me that we have put our fingers on one of the greatest challenges of American life today. Have we built channels for expression of public will, in the face of this urgent need for planning, and at a time when our civilization is threatened in a race of various groups for security? I think a high note of the conference has been reached this morning."

Mrs. Bevens introduced Milo Perkins, President, Federal Surplus Commodities Corporation, who, on request, spoke briefly on the Food Order Stamp Plan, for which he is the administrator in the Department of Agriculture. Mr. Perkins said, in part:

"The plan involves the offering of an opportunity to people who get public assistance to buy books of stamps. The stamps come in two colors, orange and blue. The person who buys the orange book buys an amount approximately equal to the amount of money he now spends for food. Then instead of giving money to supplement,

we add 25 cents worth of blue stamps for every 50 cents worth of orange stamps which the individual buys, so in effect we are adding to the income. The blue stamps are good to buy eight or nine surplus foods, including dairy products, fruit, and vegetables, so that by buying orange stamps in the amount of money which he is now using for food, he can get 50 percent more of the vitamin-rich foods.

"The grocery people have told us they will do everything they can to push the sales of surplus commodities, not only for the benefit of the farmers who have the surplus products but for the benefit of the consumer as well. They plan to make the unit price less because of the greater volume they will handle. . . ."

After discussion, the meeting adjourned for lunch.

Just before the afternoon session the United States Department of Agriculture motion picture, "The River," was shown. Mrs. Bevins then introduced Mrs. Sayre, who was discussion leader for the last session of the gathering.

SECOND AFTERNOON

Discussion Question: In the Opinion of American Homemakers, How Can Agricultural Policy Best Contribute to the Attainment of More Abundant Living?

Mrs. Sayre began the discussion by pointing out that there were differences between regions in this country as well as between groups. She said:

"... The thing I am concerned about is whether we need education not only between groups but, when thinking of it from the point of a national agricultural policy, between regions? We have some people from the West who are cattle people, we have some people from the South who are cotton farmers, we have some dairy farmers in the North—is there any necessity of bringing these groups together for greater understanding?"

The discussion was continued by a woman from Virginia who said:

"I am interested in knowing what the cotton farmer is doing, and I don't know whether I would say I need education; I think I just need to know and understand. I realize I need the product. I need the cotton—and we get it from those who are raising cotton. We are raising wheat, and I know they can use our wheat. We need the product that each produces, and I think we should have a better understanding. We need to know each other well. We need to know those who are working. . . I don't think we in Virginia understand each other any better on the farm than we do in the city."

Mrs. B. B. Robertson, Home Demonstration Club member, of Wyoming, said:

"I think that has been brought home to us in the West, possibly more so than some of the other sections, because in my section of the country we are livestock producers—range livestock producers—who are still very much individualists. We have not been able to convince these livestock men that the present program for agriculture is a program that can solve their problems. They are willing to go along with the soil conservation program, the improvements on the ranges and reseeding program, but they cannot see the other program, the

wheat or the cotton or tobacco, that it affects them or gives them any particular benefit. . . .

"I think the need for better understanding was brought home to us several years ago when we had quite a division of opinion. . . between the livestock producer and the dairyman. We were able to iron out that difficulty . . . to find a common ground. And I think we do need a bringing together of our problems—regionally, possibly, before we bring them together nationally, because we are closer to them regionally. We might still go back a way and bring them together in States, and get our people in the frame of mind to accept the other fellow's viewpoint, and then take them into our region. I think such conferences as we are having today could be very well held in the regions of the United States, bringing together not only women but also men."

Mrs. Sayre said:

"I think we are all pretty well agreed that a policy for agriculture should be national. We also feel that there are conflicting interests. I wonder, in a country as big as the United States, what to do to get these interests working together, what to do to get a cattleman who feels that a national program would be entirely against his interests? How do you resolve these conflicts?"

Mrs. Parkinson thought the answer was to be found in thinking nationally.

Mrs. Kennedy stressed the same point and called for a forgetting-of-self, in the interest of the whole.

Another woman pointed out that the fundamental principles of a good program were not sectional or regional, though they might appear so, when applied to local conditions, if only the details and not the principles of the program were studied.

Mrs. Sayre posed the question whether "an agricultural policy should be directed toward the general welfare or was the Department of Agriculture set up for rural people only?"

To which Mrs. Mies replied:

"I should say it was general welfare. Certainly just because the Federal Land bank and I own a farm, is no reason that it is mine with which to do anything I want; I should figure on the general welfare when I am managing that farm. It seems to me anybody should be interested in soil conservation, as I said this morning, whether they are going to live from the soil or whether they are going to eat the products of the soil; and if you and I have any concern for our children and our children's children, whether we live in the country or in town, we have got to be interested in soil conservation—and that is public welfare."

Mrs. Merle Loomer, of Minnesota, a Farm Security Administration client, spoke in behalf of home ownership. She said:

". . . We feel that ownership of a farm gives such security as will tend to make the farmer raise better crops. He wants his farm to be productive, and I think he will want a good farm. There is not anybody who wants to go and buy a farm that will not produce. . . . I think you will remember Secretary Wallace saying last night that there were farms in certain regions that the Department would not

even buy for farmers because it knew they were not productive. If people could be transferred from these poorer soils and given land some place where they could produce—perhaps not a large farm but where they could raise more products from less acreage—that might help. . . . I am thinking of the average farmer and not thinking of those who are well to do, those who have everything they want; I think the average farmer is like us, we are hoping for rural electrification to come through; and if we as farmers can make some money, we are going to get just an awful lot of things from all of you that manufacture all these things that we need. We will put in bathrooms and buy much nicer clothes and go places.

"This is going to lead to more than that. I think it is going to lead to better homes; and if we have better homes, we are going to give our children better educations—give them better entertainment in their own community and make them better Americans. I want them to be better Americans. . . . Doesn't that mean that we are going to have to have more cooperation? . . . Labor and agriculture have to cooperate to bring these things about."

After leading a discussion of Farm Security Administration problems, E. R. Henson, Assistant Director, Tenant Purchase Division of the Farm Security Administration, United States Department of Agriculture, concluded by saying:

"... The families on the farms raised as good a living as they could, then they would go into this factory and work and make as much clothing as they could. Industry came around and didn't want us to do that. They didn't want us to run these factories. It was a 'Government subsidized' factory. You can see what is covered, and perhaps agriculture and industry were both right. But in attempting to solve the problems of this straitened group of people we ran into something like you have been talking about here. We had factories that stood idle for 4 or 5 years. We have been securing some concessions from both industry and agriculture to let people work some on the farms to get food so that they can live, and to work part time in making mattresses."

Someone asked:

"I wonder as regards the public welfare: Is it cheaper to let them raise something on the farm and have a factory or take care of them on relief?"

And someone else replied:

"The thing it seems to me that most unemployed meet, both in agriculture and in industry, is a state of 'no man's land' between the various phases of activity, and when they are in that phase they are the responsibility of all of us. They are potential agricultural workers, they are potential industrialists. We are going to come to these things sometime. If we have a conference like this 2 or 3 years from now, I expect we will go out and visit some of these projects that have been laughed at, and some of them will give us evidence and information along the line of how we can generally take care of our unemployed so that they may hold up their heads, and by training take them out into fields of work where they can find employment."

Mrs. Thigpen described the Roanoke Farm Security Administration community in which she lives, and commented on the sense of security home ownership gave.

Mrs. Sayre asked if the loss of a home did not give the reverse feeling to a family, and said that in her State, Iowa, 58 percent of the land is farmed by tenants. She asked if there was a connection between this fact and the general welfare.

A Southern woman estimated that tenants moving about seeking better homes spend about \$25,000,000 a year; money which would perhaps be better spent for food and clothes. Furthermore, she pointed out, if a family doesn't stay long enough in a community to make friends and become interested in schools and community life, that family is not making its contribution to the general welfare, which is an essential thing in a democracy.

This statement brought on discussion of lease systems and land tenure. A speaker pointed out:

"Now, according to population studies, our cities would be depopulated in three generations if it were not for the children from the farms going to the city, and if those children are going to the city, I wonder what kind of citizens they will make in the city unless they have stable homes and are properly fed, properly clothed, and properly educated? I think it is just as important for the people here who represent the cities—for them to see the need of an agricultural program or any other program that will advance civilization on the farms—as it is to us, because it is important to them if our children are going to the cities."

Discussion toward the questions: Why do tenants move? Why tenants do not repair and keep in repair the places they rent? Why they "let things run down?" and a woman who is now in the home-ownership class by cooperation with Farm Security Administration said:

"Someone wanted to know why a tenant shouldn't be interested in fixing up the place. A tenant often finds it hard to get the landlord to furnish the repairs and, after all, we don't like to build up somebody else's farm, and being a tenant you don't know how long you will be there. We have now made a long-term plan for various ways of improvement on lines of beauty, and I think you can readily see how you couldn't do that as long as you didn't know how long you would stay on that other man's farm."

Mrs. Schuttler said:

"I wonder if one has to take into consideration not only the things that are desirable but the things that are feasible. Is it humanly possible, or is it actually desirable, to make every tenant and every sharecropper in the United States a landowner any more than you are going to make every city and town person a home owner? Isn't there somewhere in between? What I am trying to get at is this: I don't believe we want to lose sight of the fact that for the evils of tenancy, there is also a possibility of another arrangement which would give permanency and stability besides ownership, outright, all the way down the line. . . .

"There is such a thing as a leasing system and the correct kind of contract between a farm owner and his tenant that I think we shouldn't lose sight of. I don't think it is a good idea to get the idea that farm ownership—I mean universal ownership—is either the only possibility or the only correct answer."

Home ownership in cities was discussed and the statement was made that 80 percent of the workmen in Detroit who had bought homes lost them in the depression.

Several people said that the question of home ownership in cities was not the same as on farms because the farm was a business as well as a home.

Mrs. Ahart said:

"If anyone doubts how the loss of farms affects people, I can invite you to come to California; you will see the people who have lost their farms in the Dust Bowl, how they have come to California, and the pitiful, awful way they have to live. This picture we saw of the sharecroppers along the river is nothing to the way these people are living in California, and if you have any doubt of how it affects the public welfare, just come to California and see for yourself."

Mrs. Thigpen said:

"In my own experience, I have seen people . . . who moved from year to year. They have never exercised the privilege of the ballot, never stayed in one place long enough to vote, and have never seen who was coming up here to represent them. That is one thing that home ownership does—it makes citizens."

Mrs. Sayre asked:

"Is it possible that some of the things we have been talking about—the lack of soil conservation and the loss of farm ownership—are due to the fact that we haven't had in the United States an agricultural policy—or have we had? Down through the years have we had an agricultural policy, a national agricultural policy, or are any of the things we are talking about due to the fact that we have not had a policy?"

Discussing the point of an enduring agricultural policy, several voices spoke almost together:

" . . . I may be wrong, but I had the impression that we had always had aid to agriculture. That is, first of all we heard of it in terms of the Extension Service, and then suddenly we had the Federal Farm Board, and everybody all over the country was told to cooperate, and then we heard about A. A. A. coming in. I don't know whether these plans worked or not, but we had them."

" . . . Take just the Extension Service, that is not very long-lived, I think officially since 1914, but there was a lot of land gone before 1914."

" . . . Did that really bring in a national agricultural policy?"

" . . . No; it brought in education to a lot of individuals."

" . . . I feel that in present-day farming we are somewhat outliving this rugged individualism, this puritanical thinking. We have had to own our farms. Now, I live on the prairie soil, the best farm around in Vienna, and due to the depression, some of the best farms of that area have been purchased with Chicago capital. . . . They cannot help the community expand because the tenant, of course, will bear only his portion."

At this point, Mrs. Edwards said:

" . . . About this matter of agricultural policy: I think that most of us are aware that it is a program or probably a number of programs which all dovetail into each other so that all of them work toward a common goal, and really in spite of all the things the Department of

Agriculture has done in the past, we have only had what we would call a policy—in that definition—since approximately 1934; at least we have had the ‘makings,’ a general foundation of a policy since that time, and it seems to me that we have accomplished a great deal more since we have had a general understanding of trying to put all these ideas together, all these programs into what might be called one policy which would, through benefiting agriculture, also benefit all the rest of the groups in the United States.”

Speaking on the question, “Why did we not have a continuing agricultural policy before the 1930’s,” Mrs. Charles Sewell, administrative director, Associated Women of the American Farm Bureau Federation, summed up the decade before, when farmers were trying to secure legislation. And Mrs. Schuttler said:

“Up to, say, 1914, 1915, 1921, or thereabouts, agriculture had not been seriously conscious of its problems over any period of time, because the increasing land values and the unpaid labor of women and children in the poultry yard, the dairy, and garden, for instance, prevented farm people from knowing that agriculture was going broke. In 1921, or thereabouts, agriculture awoke very definitely to the fact that it was bankrupt, and from that time on in gradually increasing numbers farmers in an organized way got together and studied their problems. That has been a slowly evolving process which has culminated in whatever we have of a national agricultural policy, which is still fragmentary, which leaves very much to be desired but is anyway a step in the right direction, and I do think it has been the result of conscientious, unremitting organized effort on the part of farm people through the years, consisting of an enormous lot of self-education and some attempt at getting the problem before the Nation as a whole.”

Discussion turned on the interest of consumers in an agricultural policy. Mrs. Bishop spoke of the steady supply of good citrus fruit at reasonable prices which she, as a city consumer, had enjoyed all winter; and the marketing-agreement phase of the A. A. A. to insure orderly marketing; and the Surplus Commodities Corporation purchases to put a floor under the price were discussed.

It was pointed out that the Ever-Normal Granary plan is in the interest of consumers as well as grain producers because of the protection it affords in years of scarcity.

The question was then raised by several speakers, “Does the Department of Agriculture itself think that the present policy is the best possible from every angle?” Employees of the Department present declined to speak on this point, Mr. Jones saying:

“... Surely the members of this group would not find it very helpful . . . for someone from the Department of Agriculture to attempt to estimate which are permanent or which are temporary features of the law. Even if it were fitting and proper that we do that, it couldn’t be done quite so well as the secretary did it last night. Rather shouldn’t the flow be the other way? You tell us which is temporary and which is permanent, and more than that, you tell us whether the legislation that underlies activities is actually being administered in a way that protects the interests of the whole people. And since greater abundance is our main objective . . . I am still concerned about the question I raised before . . . In the

minds of the people here, is abundance the thing we should seek? And, if so, does agricultural policy as we now emphasize it do everything within its power to look further toward that abundance?"

Dr. Anna Spiesman Starr, professor of social psychology at Rutgers University, spoke in answer to Mr. Jones' question:

"I would be glad to give my opinion on that. I think it does not, and the great area which I feel is being neglected, perhaps because of economics, is the urban as well as the rural woman who is a consumer. Now, we are all consumers, but I think that the Department of Agriculture has a chance, an opportunity for a finer relationship with the homemakers, and I think again it comes back to information and education. I am not satisfied with just plain facts. I mean education from the point of view of enthusiasm. I mean the utilization of all the factors possible in making home living more rich. I think the 4-H Clubs do splendid work. I think the Consumers' Guide also. But I think we have to show younger women the importance of homemaking and their important role in determining what is to be consumed, and how to use it and manage it."

Mrs. Elizabeth H. Cox, State director, Consumers' Institutes of Massachusetts, said:

"I would like to bear out what the speaker who just spoke said, and I hope we won't lose sight of the fact that the urban consumer needs help as well as the rural consumer, and I think the Department of Agriculture has done a great deal toward bringing that about."

Mrs. Edwards undertook to assemble and evaluate some of the services of the Department:

"I should like to list some of the things which I feel the policy of the Department of Agriculture is doing toward helping consumers as well as toward helping farmers. The policy in regard to soil conservation has been discussed here before. I believe most of us have decided that soil conservation is necessary.

"Certainly, if we take people off the farms because they no longer have farms, they are going to go into the cities and complicate problems there. The return of ownership—insofar as Farm Security is able to bring it about—we have discussed as being important to urban people as well as to farmers. The country is benefited when farmers have a feeling of ownership in their farms.

"Then, there is the food stamp plan under the program of the Surplus Commodities Corporation which Mr. Perkins outlined for us this morning. He said it was rough and that probably in working it out, there will have to be changes, but surely this is going to be of tremendous benefit to consumers.

"The policy toward building parity between farm prices and the things the farmer buys is bound to be another great help to consumers. In addition, there is the Ever-Normal Granary program, and the program of Crop Insurance for those people who suffer the loss of their crops through drought, flood, or insect pests. If we have a program which will put buying power into the hands of the farmer through an insurance policy, that is going to help the city consumer as well as the farmer."

Mrs. Dorothy J. Bellanca, vice president, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, said:

"One more question: Is the Department of Agriculture doing enough to create greater abundance for the American home? You are planning a big job for the Department of Agriculture. I can't see how the Department of Agriculture can do it by itself. I think you need to have the cooperation of the Department of Commerce; that takes in industry. You need to have the cooperation of the Labor Department; that takes in labor. I don't think that one individual Department can secure the abundance for the American homes that need it, because it is an interchange between farmers, labor, and industry, and we have got to work together to bring it about. I was interested to hear the expression of the lady from Nevada, saying they found out that working with labor for certain legislation they had gotten so much further and they got legislation that was good for both the farmer and labor. That is something we have got to get out of this conference, not only the Agriculture Department, but all must take part. You may have the most elaborate or intelligent program, a program that is very useful for the farmer and that will eventually react on the worker, the laborer; but if you are not supported by industry, if industry's wheels are idle—well, your program won't work."

Discussion then turned on the question of how urban people could learn of agricultural policy and understand their own vital relationship to it.

A woman asked that Dr. Starr tell just what she had in mind as to "enthusiastic education?"

Dr. Starr replied:

"I mean something very simple, which is this: When we go home our children at home are going to say, 'Mother, what have you been doing all this time?' and I am going to try very hard to give them a broader glimpse of what it means to be a responsible citizen. I think we are wrong if we have felt it is our job just to keep house instead of making our boys and girls realize that making homes is the greatest and most challenging job in the whole world, out of which comes abundance of living, the realization of duty well done, with vision toward a future which more nearly realizes the best any of us can do. I call that abundance. I think just numerical statistics will not do it, but I think it has to be a gleam in the eye, a push and an urge, and a faith in ourselves and in our neighbors and people far beyond that point which is 'sensible.'"

Summarizing, Mr. Jones said:

"... We passed on ... to ask whether or not our Nation was capable of abundant living, whether we possessed the potentialities for creating it. It was our general opinion that this land of plenty is actually a land of plenty of potentialities, and it was at that point that Dr. Ezekiel came in to say that what we held as an opinion was a fact in two ways; namely, in reference to raw materials and in reference to the techniques of using those materials for production. We possessed the potentialities for greater abundance, but, added Dr. Ezekiel, even in the years when we prided ourselves so much on our plenty, we were not making the most of the resources for production which we then had available.

"It was at this point that the question was raised as to why, in the face of such potentialities, do we still see unemployment and low

levels of living, lack of abundance? Dr. Ezekiel gave you what has happened to industry when he emphasized monopoly and monopolistic repression of free competition. Price policies of industry were mentioned. . . . investment policies were barely mentioned, but at least, I think you became conscious of the fact that all three of these policies . . . had been used as tools from time to time to repress competition, and that the result had been for all of us inadequacy in abundance.

"Then, in some detail, we traced it back to farm marketing, and before the morning was over, we had reached the high note of asking, 'What does all this mean to the farmer and the worker? Is it not through them that the permanence of abundance should come?'"

"We adjourned for lunch, and in the afternoon two problems were discussed. The first, material needs . . . food and dietary habits; the one relating to the fact that there are great groups of our people who actually cannot afford to eat decently; the other that, while that may be true for a great many, there is also another problem of education in dietary habits. I don't think I shall go into any detail on that at all, except to point out that in talking about our schools the economic inability of many people to take advantage of education became apparent.

"You talked about what can we do. Two things were developed this morning . . . One was industry . . . Industry needs to reemploy that part of our population that is idle as consumers and at present noncontributory as producers. Dr. Ezekiel gave us a great deal of assistance in talking about some of the elements that will have to be taken into account in unemployment. A question was raised as to the possibility of securing the active cooperation of what came to be called business interests . . .

"Then we asked what we could do. What can this group do? And once again we talked about going back home to try to . . . analyze the problem, to make people aware of the fact that it exists, to acquaint them with reasons . . . I recall the example that was given about freight rates this morning, and I began to wonder if some of us who feel greatly impressed when we see signboards in our stations tied it up with our problems which were brought before us this morning. Certainly, we came to reconsider some of our values.

"This afternoon's discussion is too recent to have to repeat. We have characterized agricultural policy as national. We have characterized it as designed to aid in the general welfare. We have characterized it as meaning something which must be of interest to the whole Nation, the consumer as well as the agricultural producer. Out of the welter of all this discussion, there are two conclusions I should like to draw. One is this . . . the patience, the interest which you have shown. Often I realized you were listening to a speech of someone with whom you have disagreed entirely. I believe we have come . . . not only to find our points of interest, but deliberately to select points of conflict and rearrange our interests. I think we have done that to a considerable degree.

"The second conclusion I should like to draw is that I believe we have profited by drawing no conclusion. I have been asked many times what is the purpose of this conference. I think one purpose is

that we in the Department of Agriculture, and I hope you who have come, will profit from pointing out the sphere in which our thinking will have to be done. Certainly, it was not to direct our thinking. It was not to conclude, it was to stimulate our thinking."

WOMEN WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE CONVERSATIONS

On the Relationship of the Welfare of the American Home to Agricultural Programs, and the Official Personnel and Advisers Who Served the Gathering.

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TEN STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE

In setting up a conference of urban and rural women to discuss the relation of agricultural programs to abundance in the American home, these things are desirable:

1. That the number of persons taking part in the conference be small enough to sit in a circular or octagon-shaped group where everyone can see everyone else as the conversations proceed. And that the room be one in which it is possible to conduct discussion, i. e., having no obstructing columns or other obstacles to communication.

2. That the number of persons be equally divided between representatives of urban organizations and rural organizations with an equal number of urban and rural individuals invited because certain income levels are not usually represented in organizations.

3. That the sponsoring agencies carefully check their list of organizations to be sure that all rural and urban interests are represented, including church and labor and consumer groups.

4. That the sponsor invite these organizations to name delegates to a conference to be held on a given date at a given place, and, when the names are received, correspond with the delegates in regard to the *details* of the meeting.

5. That each conferee be sent in advance a short list of stimulative questions, but that no printed or mimeographed material whatsoever be distributed at the meeting.

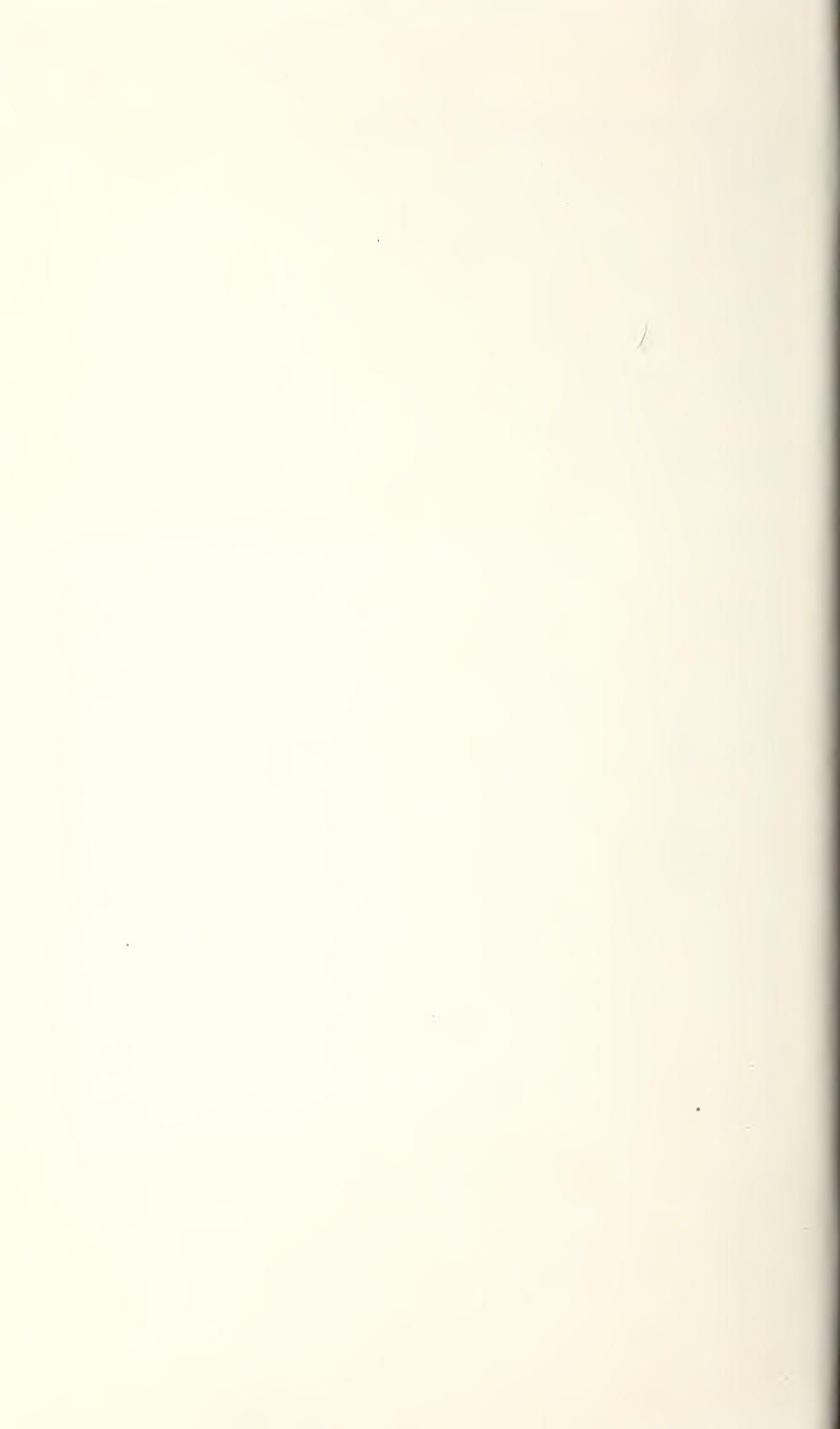
6. That the sponsor arrange to have present at the meeting, for consultation, persons competent to reply to questions on the subjects of nutrition, housing, health, production—both agricultural and industrial, distribution, education, farm income and expenditures, urban income and expenditures, conservation, tenancy, agricultural and investment policy. These consultants are not expected to “address” the conference, but to supply wanted information at appropriate points in the discussion. They may be representatives of official agencies whose programs are in fields being discussed.

7. That the conference sit for 2 days, with an evening session the first day; the evening session being used to present the present status of agricultural services and such new or complicated economic angles of the subject of the conference as call for detailed discussion.

8. That a member of the conference be appointed by the sponsoring agency to act as chairman—the duties of the chairman being to call the meeting to order and, after an opportunity for announcements, to adjourn it at the close of each session.

9. That a discussion leader be in charge of the discussion and propose a series of questions designed to give the conferees the fullest opportunity to examine the problems relating to agriculture and the American home—the leader to summarize the conversations of each session just prior to adjournment.

10. Before final adjournment there should be discussion on what activity, if any, should follow the conference.



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